

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A process for producing iron oxide-containing pellets comprising agglomerating fine ore particles in the presence of a binder system to form green pellets, and heating said green pellets in stages to a final temperature in the range of about 1,275-1,350°C, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said binder system is substantially free of hydrophobic liquid and comprises
  - (i) an inorganic binder and/or an organic binder, and
  - (ii) a binder additive selected from boron-containing compounds, calcium fluoride, and combinations thereof.
2. (original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the boron-containing compound is selected from boron oxide, calcium borate, sodium borate, boric acid, and boron nitride.
3. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 ~~or 2~~ wherein the boron-containing compound is sodium borate.
4. (currently amended) The process of claim 1 ~~according to any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the binder system comprises a carboxymethyl cellulose as organic binder.
5. (original) A process for producing iron oxide-containing pellets comprising the step of agglomerating fine iron ore particles in the presence of a binder system which comprises a cellulose ether and a binder additive selected from boron-containing compounds, calcium fluoride, and combinations thereof.
6. (original) The process according to claim 5 wherein the cellulose ether is carboxymethyl cellulose or a salt thereof.